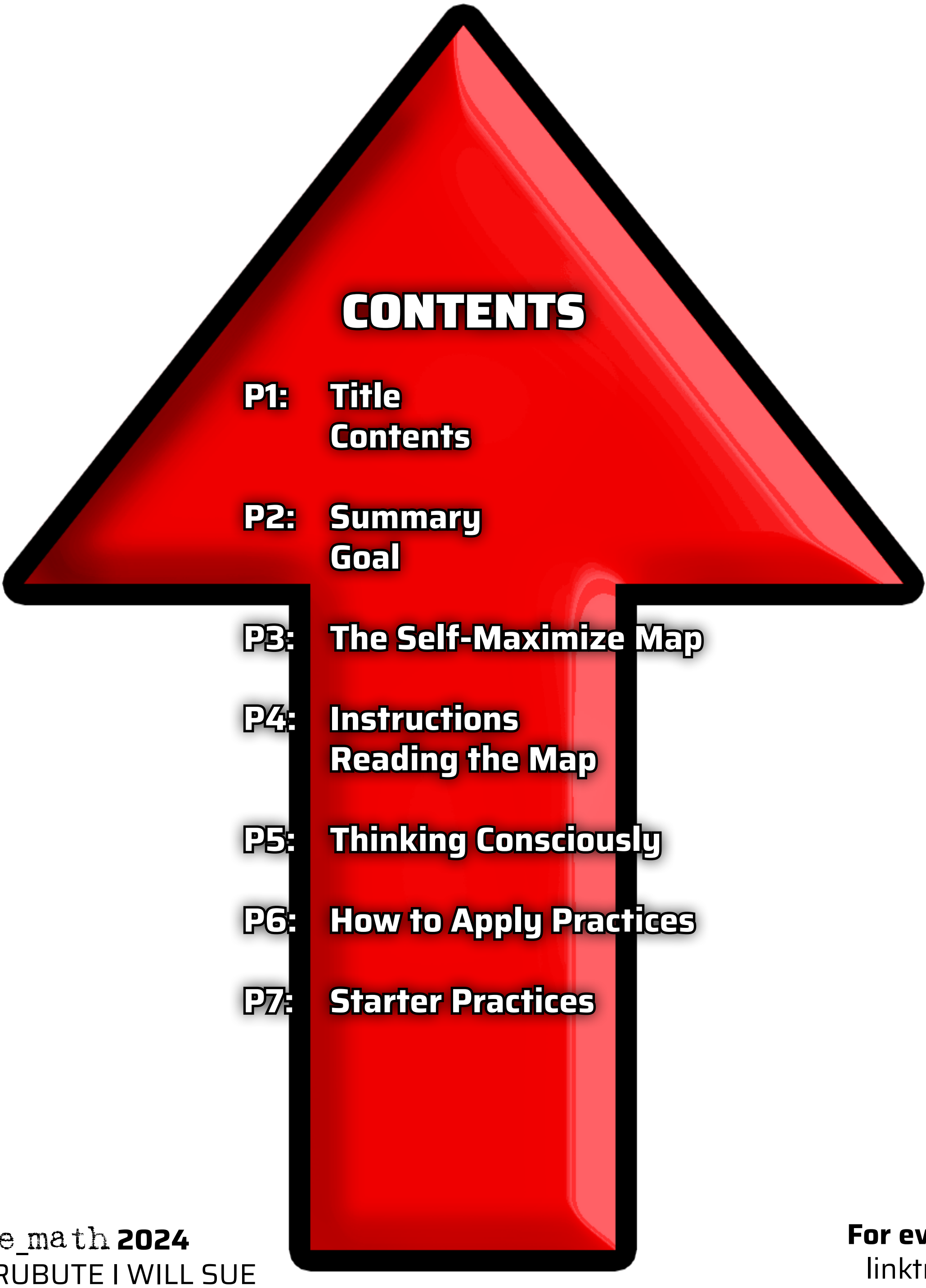
hoe_math

SELF-MAXIMIZE

RELEASED FEBRUARY 2024
GRAPHICS UPDATED MAY 2025

A FRAMEWORK FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT
THROUGH CONSCIOUS THOUGHT AND ACTION



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SUMMARY

`hoe_math` is my social media brand with an annoying name that provides insight into the psychology of dating in the modern world, as well as other social phenomena. This insight is the basis for my life coaching practice and other self-improvement content.

Self-Maximize is my response to the general character of the questions I've been asked since beginning the brand. It is a simple seven-part system that is designed to be easily memorized and applied to your daily life to help you find your own insight.

The system has room for you to add your own conscious practices to maximize your own life strategy. I have provided five exercises from my life coaching practice library to get you started. You will need to find more practices that work for you to get the most out of the system.

Originally, **Self-Maximize** was supposed to be just a YouTube video containing advice for how to maximize (or minimize) a list of traits in order to maximize your success in the dating pool, but I found that there was no way to give advice that was universally useful, so I created a system to help you generate your own insights, and a YouTube video explaining it.

Self-Maximize and the starter exercises included in it are based partly on my training in "Integral Theory," a framework for understanding consciousness created by Ken Wilber. This framework is what I used to transform my own life (several times), and my work on `hoe_math` has so far been well-received by the Integral community.

When properly understood and applied, internalizing this mind-map can help you understand and transform your life.

GOAL

The map is on the next page. It's simpler than it looks. You should consult it as you read through the packet, watch the YouTube video, and apply the map to your own life to help "install" it on your mind (create the habit of thinking about your thoughts in your everyday life). This will help you "point out" the spots where you're failing to consider something that's influencing the outcomes in your **Situation (6)**.

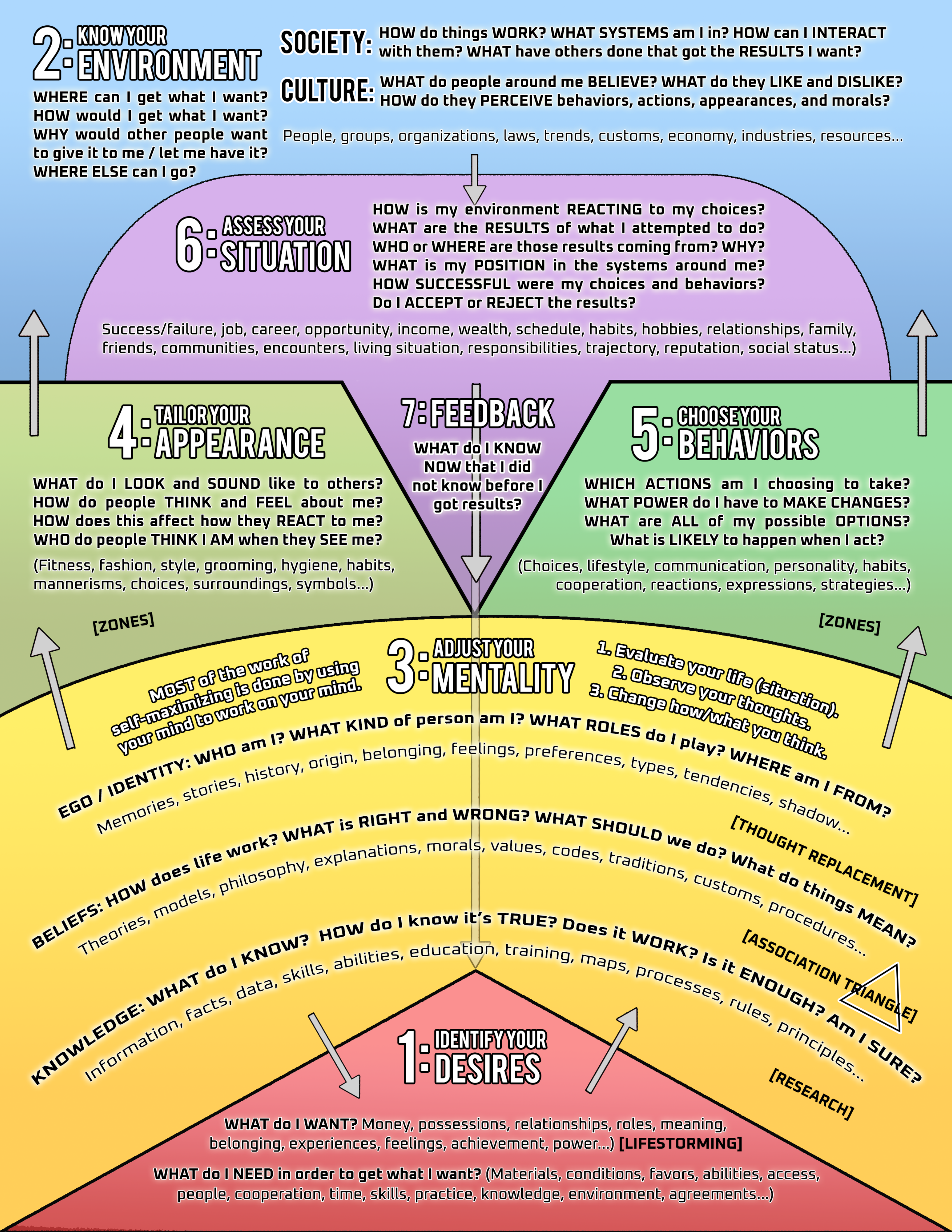
The map is made of seven major sections. I separated your self into your **Desires (1)**, your **Mentality (3)**, your **Appearance (4)**, and your **Behaviors (5)**. ***These are everything that you have control over.***

Everything that you ***do not have control over*** (the world around you), I separated into your **Environment (2)** and your **Situation (6)** (which is just "what you get back from life"), and the **Feedback (7)** you get from your world that helps you look inward.

There is a thick boundary separating the red, orange, yellow, and green sections of the map on the bottom from the blue and purple ones on top. This is to remind you where your control ends. You can choose what you do and why you do it; you cannot choose what you get back. Imagine turning the map upside-down, and everyone else's **Desires (1), Mentality (3), Appearance (4),** and **Behaviors (5)** are in your **Environment (2)**, and yours are in theirs.

These sections are in rainbow order to show the flow of consciousness from your **Desires (1)** to your thoughts **(3: Mentality)** to your actions **(4 + 5)** to the reactions of the world around you **(2)**, to your personal situation **(6)**, and then back down through **Feedback (7)** to your **Mentality (3)** or your **Desires (1)**.

Your goal in using this map is to "install" this flow into your day-to-day thoughts so that you can quickly and easily recognize which parts of it you need to pay attention to and act on. This will develop the skill of self-reflection to help you change and improve your choices **(Appearance** and **Behaviors)** using conscious thought (**Mentality** and **Desires**) so that you get more of what you want back from your **Environment (2)** and improve your life **(6: Situation).**



2: KNOW YOUR ENVIRONMENT

WHERE can I get what I want?
HOW would I get what I want?
WHY would other people want to give it to me / let me have it?
WHERE ELSE can I go?

SOCIETY: HOW do things WORK? WHAT SYSTEMS am I in? HOW can I INTERACT with them? WHAT have others done that got the RESULTS I want?

CULTURE: WHAT do people around me BELIEVE? WHAT do they LIKE and DISLIKE? HOW do they PERCEIVE behaviors, actions, appearances, and morals?

People, groups, organizations, laws, trends, customs, economy, industries, resources...

6: ASSESS YOUR SITUATION

HOW is my environment REACTING to my choices?
WHAT are the RESULTS of what I attempted to do?
WHO or WHERE are those results coming from? WHY?
WHAT is my POSITION in the systems around me?
HOW SUCCESSFUL were my choices and behaviors?
Do I ACCEPT or REJECT the results?

Success/failure, job, career, opportunity, income, wealth, schedule, habits, hobbies, relationships, family, friends, communities, encounters, living situation, responsibilities, trajectory, reputation, social status...)

4: TAILOR YOUR APPEARANCE

WHAT do I LOOK and SOUND like to others?
HOW do people THINK and FEEL about me?
HOW does this affect how they REACT to me?
WHO do people THINK I AM when they SEE me?

(Fitness, fashion, style, grooming, hygiene, habits, mannerisms, choices, surroundings, symbols...)

7: FEEDBACK

WHAT do I KNOW NOW that I did not know before I got results?

5: CHOOSE YOUR BEHAVIORS

WHICH ACTIONS am I choosing to take?
WHAT POWER do I have to MAKE CHANGES?
WHAT are ALL of my possible OPTIONS?
What is LIKELY to happen when I act?

(Choices, lifestyle, communication, personality, habits, cooperation, reactions, expressions, strategies...)

[ZONES]

[ZONES]

3: ADJUST YOUR MENTALITY

MOST of the work of self-maximizing is done by using your mind to work on your mind.

1. Evaluate your life (situation).
2. Observe your thoughts.
3. Change how/what you think.

EGO / IDENTITY: WHO am I? WHAT KIND of person am I? WHAT ROLES do I play? WHERE am I FROM?

Memories, stories, history, origin, belonging, feelings, preferences, types, tendencies, shadow...

[THOUGHT REPLACEMENT]

BELIEFS: HOW does life work? WHAT is RIGHT and WRONG? WHAT SHOULD we do? What do things MEAN?

Theories, models, philosophy, explanations, morals, values, codes, traditions, customs, procedures...

[ASSOCIATION TRIANGLE]

KNOWLEDGE: WHAT do I KNOW? HOW do I know it's TRUE? Does it WORK? Is it ENOUGH? Am I SURE?

Information, facts, data, skills, abilities, education, training, maps, processes, rules, principles...

[RESEARCH]

1: IDENTIFY YOUR DESIRES

WHAT do I WANT? Money, possessions, relationships, roles, meaning, belonging, experiences, feelings, achievement, power...) **[LIFESTORMING]**

WHAT do I NEED in order to get what I want? (Materials, conditions, favors, abilities, access, people, cooperation, time, skills, practice, knowledge, environment, agreements...)

INSTRUCTIONS

Self-Maximize is a visual tool to help you take control of your life by becoming conscious of your own mind and the world around you. It is designed to make you think carefully about each step of how your life is created so you can find what needs to change and work on it.

Each section is filled with questions that prompt you to step back and reconsider your views and your choices. You should spend time thoughtfully answering these questions and not just skip past them as if there is no further thinking to be done. You should make a habit of taking notes or journaling about your answers to these questions.

Self-Maximize is modular. It has a basic structure with seven sections. Each of these sections is designed to make you take a step back and notice new things about your life or your mind that can be changed. These sections can be filled with practices that fit your own needs and learning style. A few practices are included as suggestions to get you started (see Example Practices).

READING THE MAP

The colored map and the gray arrows, from bottom to top, show how life works on its own, without your conscious involvement. If you follow the gray arrows starting from the bottom **(1: Identify your Desires)**, you'll be able to trace how your choices **(4, 5)** interact with your world **(2)** to create your life **Situation (6)**.

Start by following the gray arrows beginning at section **1: Identify Your Desires**. First you feel a desire. This can be anything from "I want pizza" to "I have to save Western civilization."

Then, your mind **(3: Adjust your Mentality)** will evaluate this desire and either decide to abandon it and start over, or it will start figuring out how to satisfy that desire using its resources, including your knowledge, your beliefs, and your sense of who you are **(Ego / Identity).**

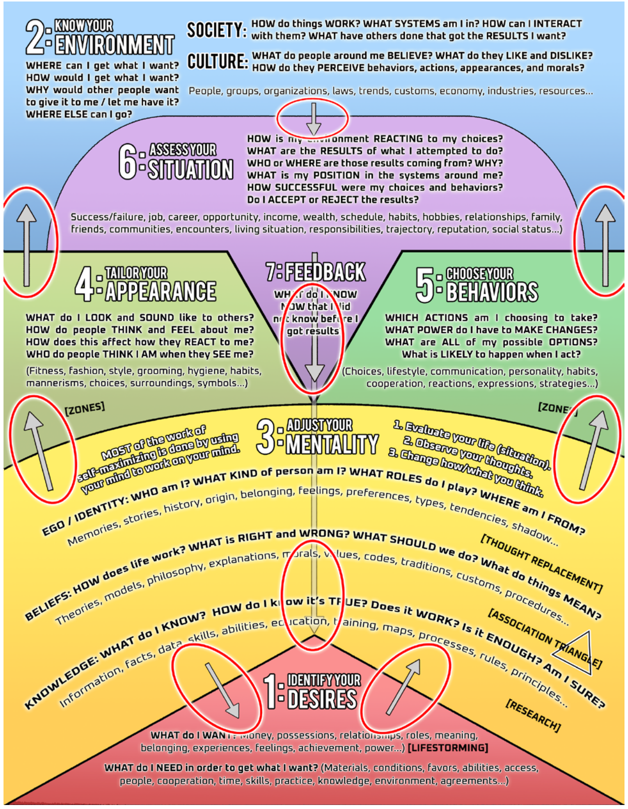
Acting on these thoughts creates your choices **(4: Tailor your Appearance** and **5: Choose your Behaviors)**. Then, the world around you **(2: Know your Environment)** including your physical location, immediate surroundings, society, and culture, will respond to your actions, and that creates what you call your "life" **(6: Assess your Situation)**.

After you live these events, you can think about how your choices and your environment interacted to create them **(7: Feedback)** and use that new information to **Adjust your Mentality (3)** or to again **Identify your Desires (1).**

That's how the real work of changing your life is done - by adjusting your own mind so that you can either try a different way to get what you want from the world around you, change what you want, or be ok with what you have.

Self-Maximize is designed to make you think about this process consciously. That's why the section numbers are out of order. If you want to take control of your life, you need to think ***before*** you act, not just ***after***.

Again, start with **1: Identify your Desires.** If you don't know what you want, use a conscious practice to help you find out. I've included **[LIFESTORMING]** as my suggestion. These practices from my life coaching library are included at the end.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Memories, stories, history, origin, belonging, feelings, preferences, types, tendencies, shadow...
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WHAT do I NEED in order to get what I want? (Materials, conditions, favors, abilities, access, people, cooperation, time, skills, practice, knowledge, environment, agreements...)

THINKING CONSCIOUSLY

Once you know what you want, figure out what you need in order to get it. Normally (unconsciously), you would move from your desires to your thoughts, and you would begin to act out of habit. Now, you are prompted to stop and think about how to proceed.

Once you know what you need, then go to **2: Know your Environment**. Now, find out ***how*** you would get whatever it is that you want. Where do you go? Who do you talk to? What materials, skills, and other resources will you need (from **1: Identify your Desires**)? Are you in a good place to get what you want? How can you do that? How will people around you react? How have other people gotten the things you want? Can you do what they did?

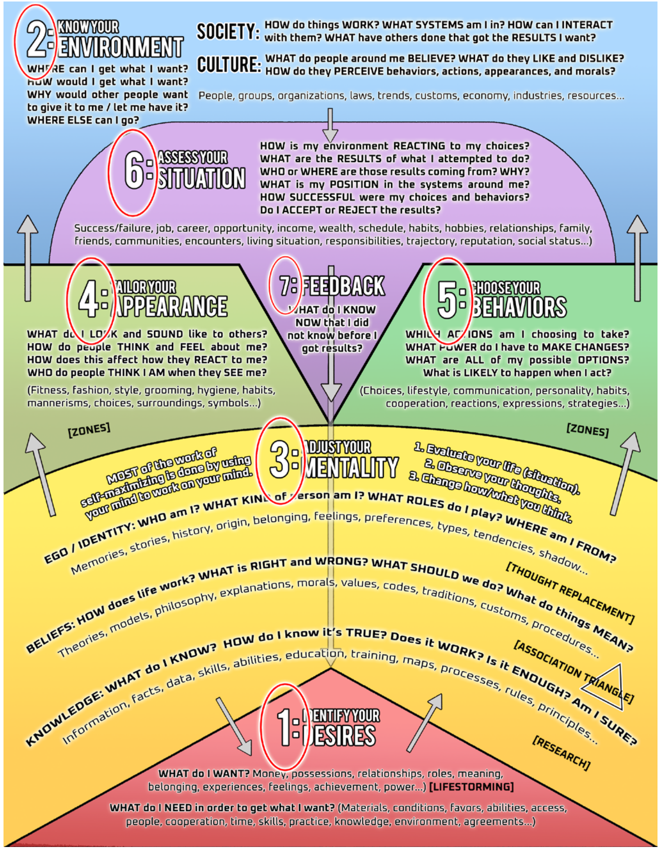
Once you answer these and any other important questions, then you can begin “thinking about thinking **(3: Adjust your Mentality)**.” Think about what you know, how things work, what you should and should not do, and who you are. Is there anything in your thought processes that may be blocking you from acting effectively? See if you need to make any changes to your mind before you act. If you want to be successful, how should others see you? What do you need to physically do? What might you be wrong about? Where can you get more information that would help you learn how to do what you need to do?

After you have a thought-out plan, go act on it. Be conscious of how you should be seen by others to maximize your probability of success **(4: Tailor Your Appearance),** and present yourself accordingly. Be conscious of what you need to do, and when, where, and how **(5: Choose your Behaviors)**. Don’t be tempted to believe that the world should “accept you as you are.” You have no control over what others accept, you only have control over how you show up. ***This is what it means to be conscious*** - to know the lines between your mind and the minds of others, control what you can control, and adapt to what you cannot control. The thick, black border line is where your control ends and the world’s reaction begins.

When you are ready, bring your choices into your world **(2: Know your Environment)**. Then, look at your results **(6: Assess your Situation)**. How did it go? Did you get the result you wanted? Why or why not? How do you know?

Once you have good answers to these questions **(7: Feedback)**, go back to **3: Adjust your Mentality**, or **1: Identify your Desires.** This is where you will spend most of your time and effort if you want to change your life.

If used properly, **Self-Maximize** will build the habit of becoming aware of what you want, where those things come from, and how you can make better choices to maximize your chances of getting them.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HOW TO APPLY PRACTICES

I have included five sample practices with **Self-Maximize (v1)** to get you started. You can use these practices along with the long-form video explanation to enhance the ways that you think about each step.

One of the practices is just **Zones**. I have included a copy each of **Zones (v2)** and **Zones (v3).** I also went over each element of **Zones** in the **Self-Maximize** YouTube video, according to my estimation of what average American men and women need to be focusing on.

These practices will provide you with powerful tools to make your mind work better for you. It's much more powerful to learn better ways of thinking than it is to rely on your own understanding as if you already know everything.

In addition to the practices included, you should be doing your own work to find practices that you can add to the way that you use **Self-Maximize**. How can you work on your desires, your knowledge, your beliefs, and your ego? Where can you learn about changing your appearance and your behavior? How can you get better feedback? You should take notes and keep them organized with the work that you do using this system, including a list of practices by section and a journal to track your progress.

The practices included are from my life coaching practice. They should give you a good running start in learning to think about your own mind and discover what was once unconscious.

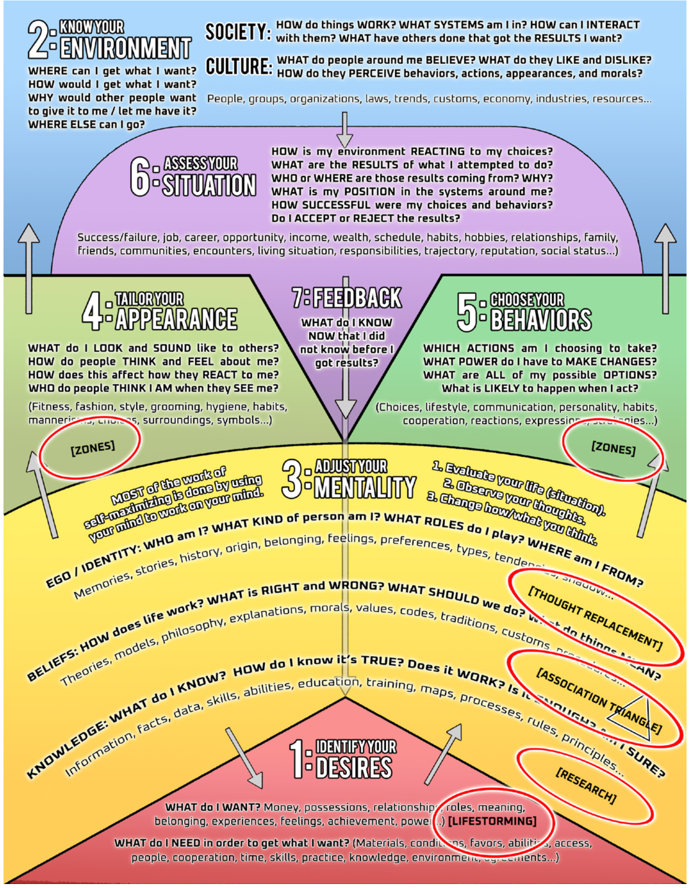
[LIFESTORMING] is brainstorming for your whole life. It includes a list of sections of your life that you should have filled in if you want to be living as maximally as possible.

[RESEARCH] is just a simple prompt to remind you that if you lack information, you have to go get it. I don't know everything. That's not how life coaching works. I know how to make your mind function. You have to fill it up with first-hand knowledge.

[ASSOCIATION TRIANGLE] is a way to check on your beliefs to see if they've been constructed in a way that isn't helping you. I gave some examples in the **Self-Maximize** YouTube video. If you discover that you have an unhelpful belief because of subconscious associations, you can work directly on those associations to change the belief.

[THOUGHT REPLACEMENT] is a meditative exercise where you need to sit quietly and do nothing so that your mind can wander off by itself. Once it does, your job is to notice where it goes, and then figure out why it did that. This will tell your conscious mind the story of your subconscious mind, so that you can learn more about which feelings or beliefs cause you to do what you do (or not do).

[ZONES] is my world-famous relationship map. It is designed to remind you of what men and women want from each other so that you can think about what you offer in those categories and either change it or find who wants what you have to offer.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STARTER PRACTICES

[LIFESTORMING]

Some people don't know what they want in life, and some of them don't even know that they don't know it! They go through life chasing what they feel like they're supposed to chase, and they never truly consider what it would mean to be self-directed.

This exercise is designed to jump-start the process of knowing what you truly want. **"Lifestorming"** is just brainstorming for your entire life, plus a sensation practice.

You'll need to get organized, and you'll need to know yourself. I've done the work for you of organizing your life into a few major "buckets." These are just containers that you're going to be filling with ideas that may or may not fit in them, and then you'll be getting rid of the bad ones later on. Remember, in brainstorming, you never say "no." Even if one of your ideas is really, really stupid, you write it down anyway. This trains your subconscious mind to open up and pour out options you might not expect.

Here are the "buckets:"
- Health + Fitness
- Career + Income
- Dating + Love
- Family
- Social Life
- Interests + Hobbies
- Dreams + Aspirations
- Meaning, Purpose + Spirituality

These are the basics of human existence. More or less everything that you can "do" with your life, in an ongoing sense, can fit in one of these buckets. You need to have at least a little bit of an idea of what you want in every one of them, and you also have to be pretty sure that it's what you want and not just what you think you're supposed to want.

If you think you already know what you want to put in one or more of those buckets, you should still do the exercise - you might discover something new!

How to Lifestorm

First, read the names of the buckets and think about what they mean. Some of them are pretty straightforward, like "Health and Fitness" - what are you doing to take care of yourself? Dieting? Exercising? Swimming? Fasting? Tennis? You get the idea. Some of them are deeper, like "Meaning, Purpose + Spirituality." What is life all about? Why are you here? What are your guiding principles?

Once you understand each bucket, do a brainstorming session for each one. There's no need to do it all at once; it's a lot of thinking. Just write down every idea that comes to mind for that bucket for a little while. Maybe 15 minutes or so. Again, don't say "no, that's stupid" to any of your ideas, no matter how stupid they are. Just eliminate the stupid ones later. Try to think of the things that you would most like to have in each bucket rather than being totally random.

So for example, under "Family," you could write things like: "Meet a nice girl at church. Be Amish. Have 13 chidren and train them all to be ninjas. Ninja family. Move into parents' basement. Sperm donation. Set the record for most divorces in a year. Meet someone who likes Heavy Metal and live with her and three ferrets on a boat." Again, don't hold back.

Once you've filled each bucket to the point that you can't imagine anything else, you can go ahead and get rid of the ones that are really obviously bad ideas. I think the only one I would delete from above would be divorcemaxing. Maybe the world needs a ninja family. Who knows?

If you brainstorm each and every bucket until you truly can't think of anything else you'd want to be in them, now you have a list of everything you could possibly think of to do with your life.

Sensation Practice

Now you're going to sit with each item, one by one, and imagine living them out. Start with the ones you like most - this practice is about finding what you like so you can pursue it.

As you imagine each one, pay attention to how it makes you feel in your emotions and in your body, and write it down in a Lifestorming journal. Don't worry just yet about how you're going to accomplish them. Just imagine what they would feel like. "Ninja family - kind of scared, tense. Felt like backing away from sharp objects. Don't know how I'd pay mortgage." "Amish - sad, lonely, empty feeling in my chest, would miss alcohol and TV, but excited about working with horses."

Take your time feeling these ideas out. Close your eyes if it helps. What you're doing is simulating many different ways to live and recording how they make you feel so that you know more about who you are and what you want. As you do this, write down any new ideas that come to you in the relevant buckets.

Once you're done (if you can ever finish imagining every item in every bucket), you're going to have a journal of everything you want to pursue. The choices that made you feel the greatest sense of relief, satisfaction, excitement, and happiness are the ones that you should follow, even if not in the form you wrote down. Maybe "ninja family" just becomes training in martial arts with your children or spouse. What's most important is that you find which directions are the most attractive for you. That's where motivation comes from.

Maintain your Lifestorming journal. As you begin to make some of these ideas become your reality, you're going to learn that some of them are different than you imagined - note that, too. Keep a clear, readable record of how your desires change, and add or eliminate items from the buckets as your feelings lead you to do so.

This practice will help you organize your thoughts, plan your life, and remember your motivations. If you ever get lost in life, consult the journal and remember how today was all just part of building your ninja family, or whatever you decided on.

[RESEARCH]

This practice is simple; it's just a reminder that no one's going to get new information for you. If you don't know how to get what you want, you're the only one who can figure that out, even if it's just by asking someone who already knows.

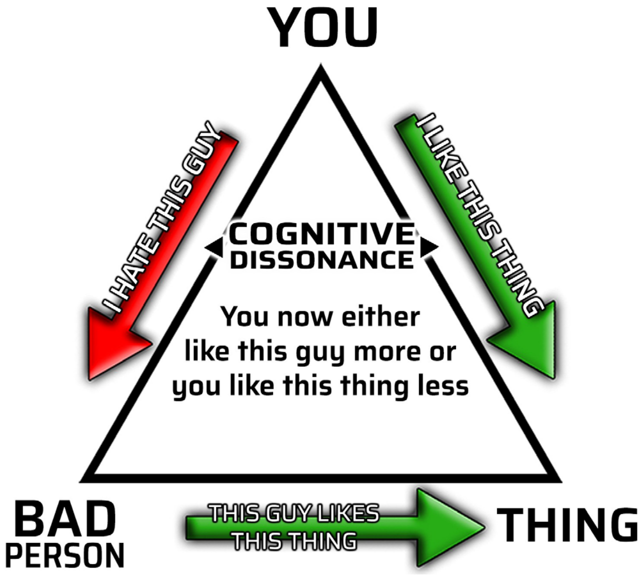
The first step is taking responsibility for your own knowledge, or lack of it. This is where most people fail, and that's why I've included such a simple exercise. You have to be able to admit "I don't know what's the best way to solve my problem," and then you have to figure out where to find more information.

You can ask people around you, especially if they know more than you. You can leave the house and go to a place where you might find people who know what you need to know. You can go to the library and read a book on a related topic. You can use resources like the Internet to gather information on your own. Just be careful - it's a lot easier to be misled on the Internet than by someone you know and trust.

If you're not getting what you want in life and your reason is "I don't know how," you can either stop there, or you can decide "I'm going to find out how," and go search for the knowledge. If you won't do that, it's already over for you. But once you know how to do something, it's only a matter of doing it.

[ASSOCIATION TRIANGLE]

This is the Association Triangle. I'll explain it below, but first let's get philosophical.


YOU
I HATE THIS GUY
I LIKE THIS THING
COGNITIVE DISSONANCE
You now either like this guy more or you like this thing less
BAD PERSON
THIS GUY LIKES THIS THING
THING

Being Wrong

Most people think that their beliefs are rational and reason-based, but they almost never actually are. This simple triangle model can help you understand why you might believe something unhelpful for irrational reasons, usually because of "cognitive dissonance" (I'll explain that term later). Once you spot a bad belief, you can then change the belief by changing those reasons.

First of all, you have to realize that everyone believes different, conflicting things, and no one believes that they're wrong. That's not mathematically possible. Someone has to be wrong, and sometimes, It's gonna be you.

Being "never wrong" is one of the worst personality traits you can have. I avoid people who are "never wrong" like they have leprosy. They make awful friends and they're not worthy of trust. I learned in my teens to enjoy finding out that I'm wrong about something because then I have the opportunity to become more right. Admitting that I'm wrong for 5 seconds and correcting myself has worked a lot better for me than staying wrong forever because I don't want to look stupid. That just makes you look stupid forever and you're the only one who doesn't know it.

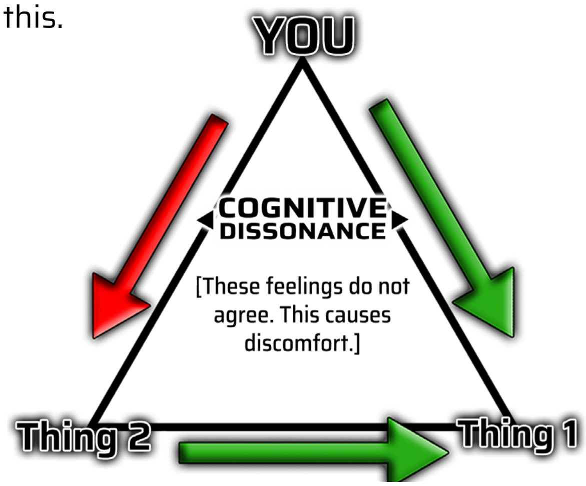
Changing your Beliefs

You should start by admitting that, just statistically speaking, it's not possible for all of your beliefs to be accurate and beneficial. If you can't admit that you're probably wrong about several things that matter to you, self-improvement is not for you. Go enjoy some more television, it would never lie to you. Bye.

Still here? If you're ready to develop your mind, read this out loud: "My beliefs are not always good. They're not always smart. They're not always good for me. They're not always true. They might be getting in my way. They might not actually make me a good person like I think they do. They might not even be mine! Sometimes, I believe something just because someone told me to, and I didn't even notice myself getting brainwashed." There, I hope that wasn't so hard. If it was, go watch TV.

If you need me to go first, I recently posted a video using Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle" as evidence for some of my claims, and then a bunch of people told me that it was basically just Communist propaganda and none of it actually ever happened. Now, I don't know what to believe! Were my schoolteachers right, or were these internet commenters? I don't know yet, because I haven't done my research. I caught myself believing something because my teachers told me to, and I know very well that my teachers were often wrong. That was stupid, but now I'm less stupid. Don't believe everything you believe!

Now that you know why changing your beliefs is important, and you're ready to start letting go of the bad ones, here again is the Association Triangle, a powerful tool to help you do this.

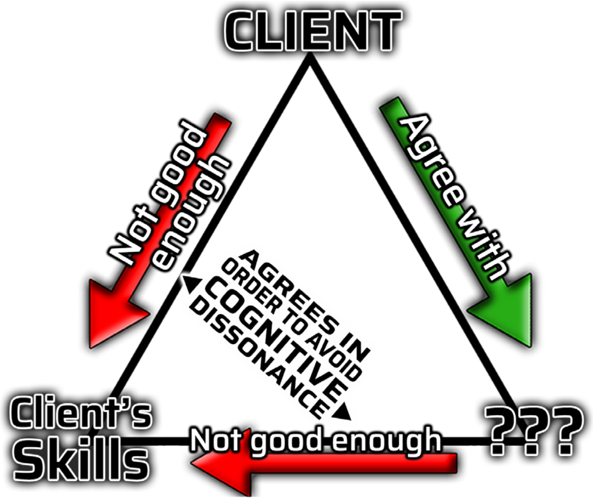


One point on the triangle (top) is always going to be your own mind. This is "how I see it" (you from the inside).

The other two points on the triangle (left, right) are going to be other people or things or events in your life, past or present. This will sometimes be your own perception of yourself, or "you from the outside."

You use the triangle by starting with a belief you'd like to examine, and then seeing how various things at points 2 and 3 (bottom left and right) affect your perceptions.

Start with a belief that's related to one of your goals or desires, especially if that belief is blocking you from moving forward. A good example would be "I'm not the kind of person who can achieve that goal," or "No one wants me to do this." I once had a client who told me "I could never get a job in video game marketing," even though he had a career in marketing already. When I asked him what was the difference between him and successful video game marketers, he realized he didn't know. That put his belief into a new context. "Why do I think I'm not good enough when other people are?" I'm not sure if he ever got the job he wanted, but I am sure that he started applying.



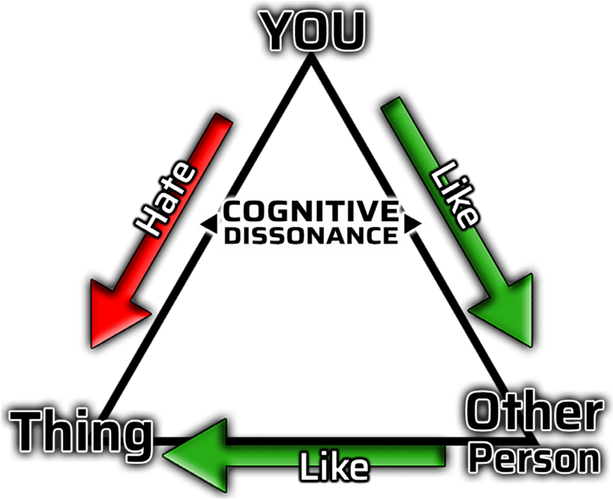
This creates a clear visualization of how your beliefs are influenced by your associations. So my client believed he wasn't good enough to get his dream job. When I asked what he would put at point 3 to justify his feelings, he didn't know, and so it was revealed to him that he had an unfounded belief.

Cognitive Dissonance

I said I would explain this term. "Cognitive dissonance" is when you have two ideas at the same time that don't go together. That causes us to be uncomfortable, and we start trying to get rid of the discomfort. It's an irrational behavior that makes people act really, really stupid sometimes. This triangle can show you when cognitive dissonance is making you act stupid, too.

If the triangle has 0 or 2 negative associations (-), then there is no cognitive dissonance. That doesn't mean you're correct! It just means you're not conflicted. If the triangle has 1 or 3 negative associations (-), there is cognitive dissonance.

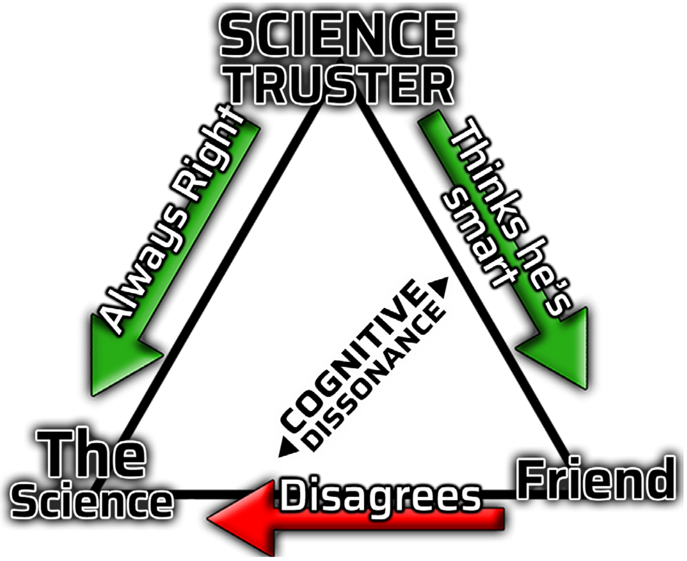
Let's start with the first example I gave at the begining of the exercise. It's a basic depiction of cognitive dissonance because you hate something, but someone you like likes it.



Go ahead and imagine a person in your life who you like a lot, and a thing in your life that you hate a lot. It could be something like "my girlfriend" and "Joe Biden." If you really like your girlfriend, and you really hate Joe Biden, but she thinks he's the bee's knees, you're going to be uncomfortable with that. That's "cognitive dissonance."

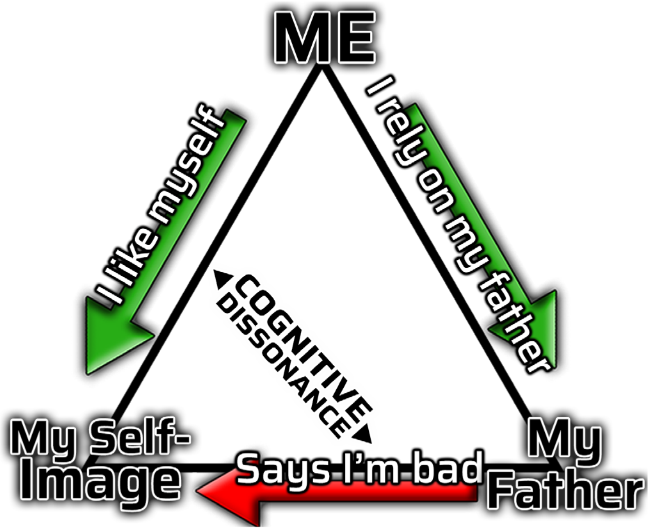
Cognitive dissonance is going to make you want to change your mind so that you can get rid of that discomfort. In this case, you would start to either like Joe Biden more, or like your girlfriend less. In my case, I would dump her like hot garbage, because what the hell is wrong with you?

Let's try another one. "The Science is always right because scientists are smart, my friend is really smart, but my friend disagrees with The Science."

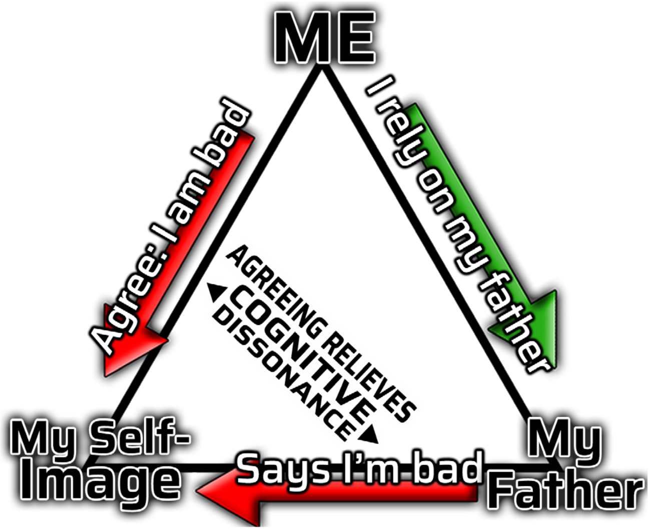

SCIENCE TRUSTER
Always Right
Thinks he's smart
COGNITIVE DISSONANCE
The Science
Disagrees
Friend

In this case, Science Truster might begin to think poorly of his friend just for disagreeing with The Science (even though Science Truster hasn't checked on The Science himself, just like I didn't check on The Jungle by Upton Sinclair). Or maybe, in some cases, it can make Science Truster question The Science (let me know if you can find a real-world example of this; I have not found any)!

I'll give you two more examples from my own life. When I was young, my father told me bad things about myself that weren't true. Sometimes he would hit me, find out that I didn't actually do whatever it was that he hit me for, and then instead of apologizing, he would say "well, you're always doing bad things anyway [so it's OK that I hit you, and it counts as punishment for whatever you did when I wasn't looking]."

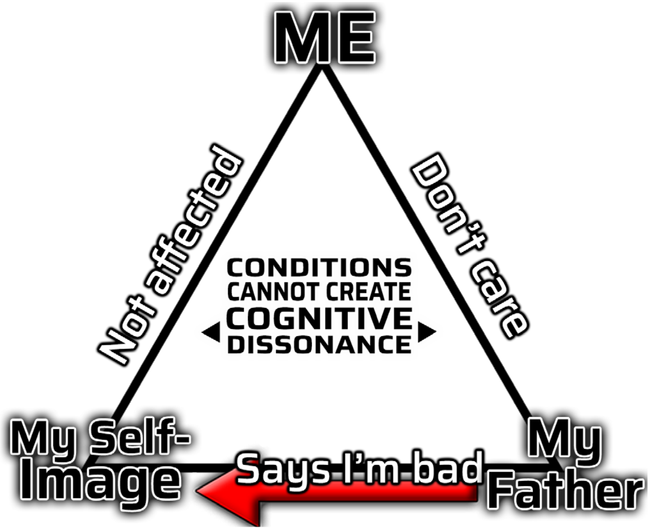

ME
I like myself
I rely on my father
COGNITIVE DISSONANCE
My Self-Image
Says I'm bad
My Father

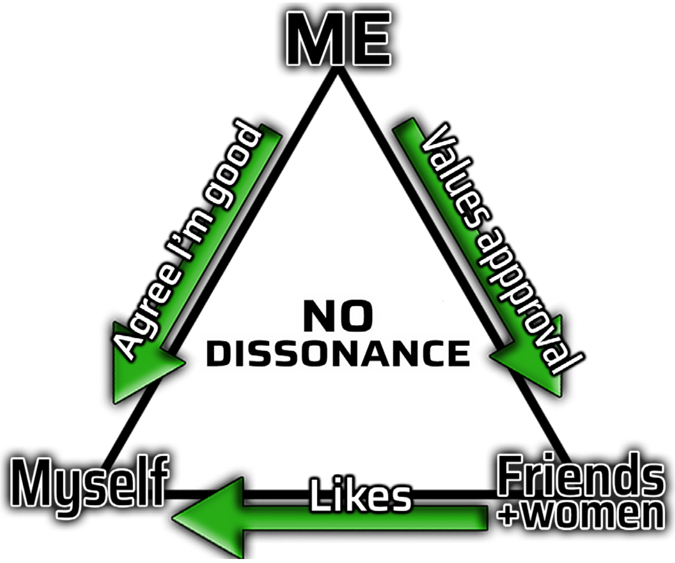
So in this triangle, at the top, I have myself from the inside (how I see life). On the left, I have "my perception of myself," and on the right, I placed my father. So, because I was a child and I depended on my father, I had a strong positive feeling about him. When he said bad things about me, he was showing a strong negative feelings towards me. This is where "cognitive dissonance" comes in. If I'm a 6-year-old child and I depend on my father, and my father says bad things about me, what do you think is going to happen? Am I going to agree with him to preserve the peace? Or am I going to create a reasonable argument for why he's wrong and distance myself from him?


ME
Agree: I am bad
I rely on my father
AGREEING RELIEVES COGNITIVE DISSONANCE
My Self-Image
Says I'm bad
My Father

Of course I agreed with him. If I didn't do that, I would have to be in opposition to my father, who was the man of the house and my only role model. That's not something a child would ever be able to do! That's too much cognitive dissonance. So an irrational belief was formed. I thought I was bad all the time because my father said so, which is not a good reason for believing something.

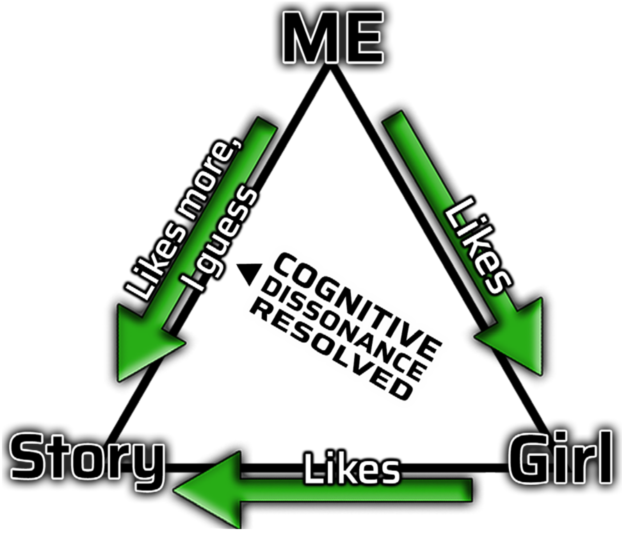
When I grew up and discovered this tool, I realized that if I wanted to change my feelings about myself, all I had to do was place lower importance on what my father said to me and higher importance on all the people who have said good things about me. I don't know about you, but I had no shortage of those. So I told myself "I would rather believe a few friends who think I'm good instead of a family member who doesn't," and as I repeated this to myself, I began to reprogram my belief that I am bad or am always causing people problems.





So you can actually reprogram your own beliefs about yourself just by valuing the people who support you more and ignoring the people who don't.

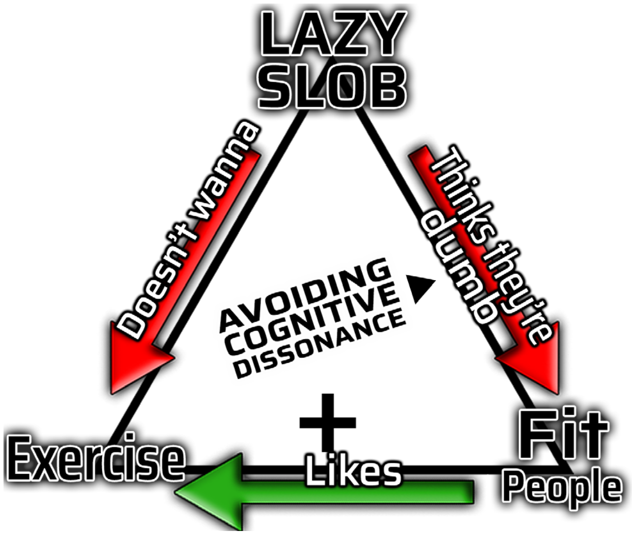
Here's one more, simpler example. I recently met someone who is still really into a book and movie series for teens as an adult. Before meeting her, I had a vaguely negative view of this series; I thought it was silly. I did not know much about it. When she told me how much she loved it and why, I began to develop a slightly positive attitude towards it. It actually seems to me now like it might be a well-written story. I don't know that for sure, but I do know that my feelings about it have changed, and it's not because of any reasons or facts - it's because someone I like likes it.



Try it Yourself

Draw a few triangles. You don't have to use color; plus and minus signs will work. Experiment by placing yourself at the top, and placing different things on the two bottom points. You will start to see that many of your beliefs that you thought were reason-based are actually mostly based on feelings. You've been coming up with the reasons later on and pretending they were always there.

Use the triangle to check any belief that seems like it might be stopping you from making better choices. If you like or dislike something, or if you believe it's true or false, put yourself at point 1, put that thing at point 2, and then check on all the associations that you can think of at point 3. You might find that you've been limiting your own beliefs for no reason. Here's one more example just beacause I've seen it so many times.



[Thought Replacement Meditation]

This practice is designed to help you notice what you're thinking instead of leaving it in your subconscious mind. If you do it enough, it will make you more able to notice what you're thinking and get control over it. This can develop and transform your self-awareness and identity.

Sit comfortably in a place that makes you feel good. You should feel happy to be there. You should not want to leave. Find a place that is a treat to be in. It should be quiet with no distractions. No phone, no people (people watching is OK, but no one who is going to distract you). This is a pleasant, relaxing time. My favorite places to do this were in front of a fountain on a park bench, and at the top of a hill over a city.

This is a slow, silent time, and not a time for worry or responsibility. Look around at pleasant things like trees or passing cars or people or clouds (or close your eyes) and enjoy being at peace. Try not to think about anything other than the nice things to look at. Do this as long as you can. Plan on at least 15 minutes, maybe an hour, and even more if possible.

As you sit, your thoughts and worries will interrupt you and pull you out of the moment - that's good. that's supposed to happen. You will start thinking about something other than the clouds. When that happens, first just notice what your thoughts are. "Oh, I'm thinking about food. Back to the clouds. Oh, I'm thinking about whether or not that girl is going to text me back. Back to the clouds."

This is like weight lifting for your mind. Each time you get distracted and go back, that's like a repetition. You're getting better at seeing what your mind is doing. That is what self-awareness is. You're bringing more of your mind into a conscious area.

Once you can see your own mind working, you can begin to change it. Some thoughts or beliefs will appear that are not true and not helpful. You might feel like you "can't have" what you want in life, or that you're "not good at" something that you need to be good at, or that you "messed up" something that mattered. These thoughts are not always true, but they usually feel true. That's why you're observing these thoughts and replacing the ones you don't need.

Once you notice a thought you want to get rid of, choose a different thought or memory to replace it. The new thought should help you go forward in life instead of blocking you. If you feel like "I can't do this," instead think: "there are ways I haven't tried yet." If you feel like "I'm afraid of a bad thing happening again," instead think: "I'm making changes, so different things will happen." Ideally, you should choose a clear, strong memory that proves your bad thought wrong. For me, when I was dealing with my insecurities, I would sometimes feel like "people don't want me around," and then I would deliberately recall all the people who did want me around, especially the ones I liked and respected the most.

These new thoughts should be true, and it helps a lot if they're based on memories that actually happened to you. You're reprogramming your subconscious mind to believe things that help you in your everyday life instead of ones that don't.

Once you feel that the new, helpful thought is true, let it go and go back to the clouds or whatever it was that you were gazing at. This moment should feel good, like a relief, or letting go of a bad feeling.

I strongly encourage using a journal along with this practice. It's easy to forget the work that you did if you don't write it down as it happens, and if you notice any patterns in your journal, you might start to notice new things about your own mind.

Instead of sitting and waiting for thoughts to arise, you can also choose to think about specific things that you need to work on the most. Bring a list with you for the session, and focus on one at a time. Just think about it as you look at the clouds, and see where your mind goes by itself.

When you really want to learn about yourself, repeat this practice as long as you can, as often as you can. An hour a day is great. 15 minutes 5 times a week is ok. The more the better, the longer the better. The more that you notice about your own mind, the more you can change who you are.

[IKIGAI]

I'm not going to write much for this one. It's also not included on the **Self-Maximize** map. I just want you to be aware that Ikigai exists, and that you should use it to structure your life. All you need to do is search for "Ikigai," and internalize it.

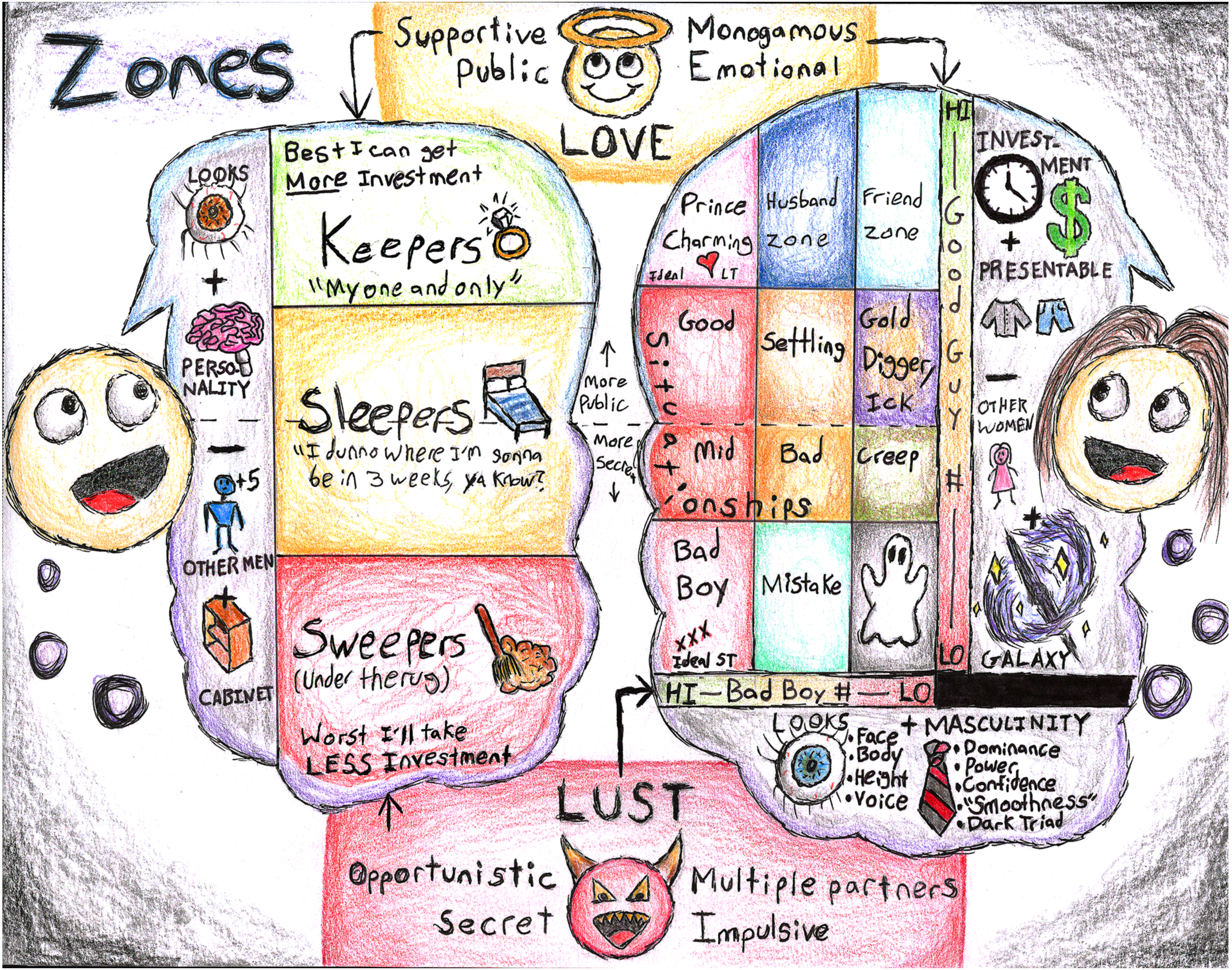
Ikigai is basically a graphic depiction of four purposes that your actions can serve - what you love, what you're good at, what the word needs, and what pays. The idea is that if you can do something that serves all four of them at once, your life will not be lacking in purpose and value.

What I'm doing with my life right now fits the principles in Ikigai, and that's why I've been so successful. You should be trying to find out how they can fit your life into the Ikigai structure, too.

[ZONES]

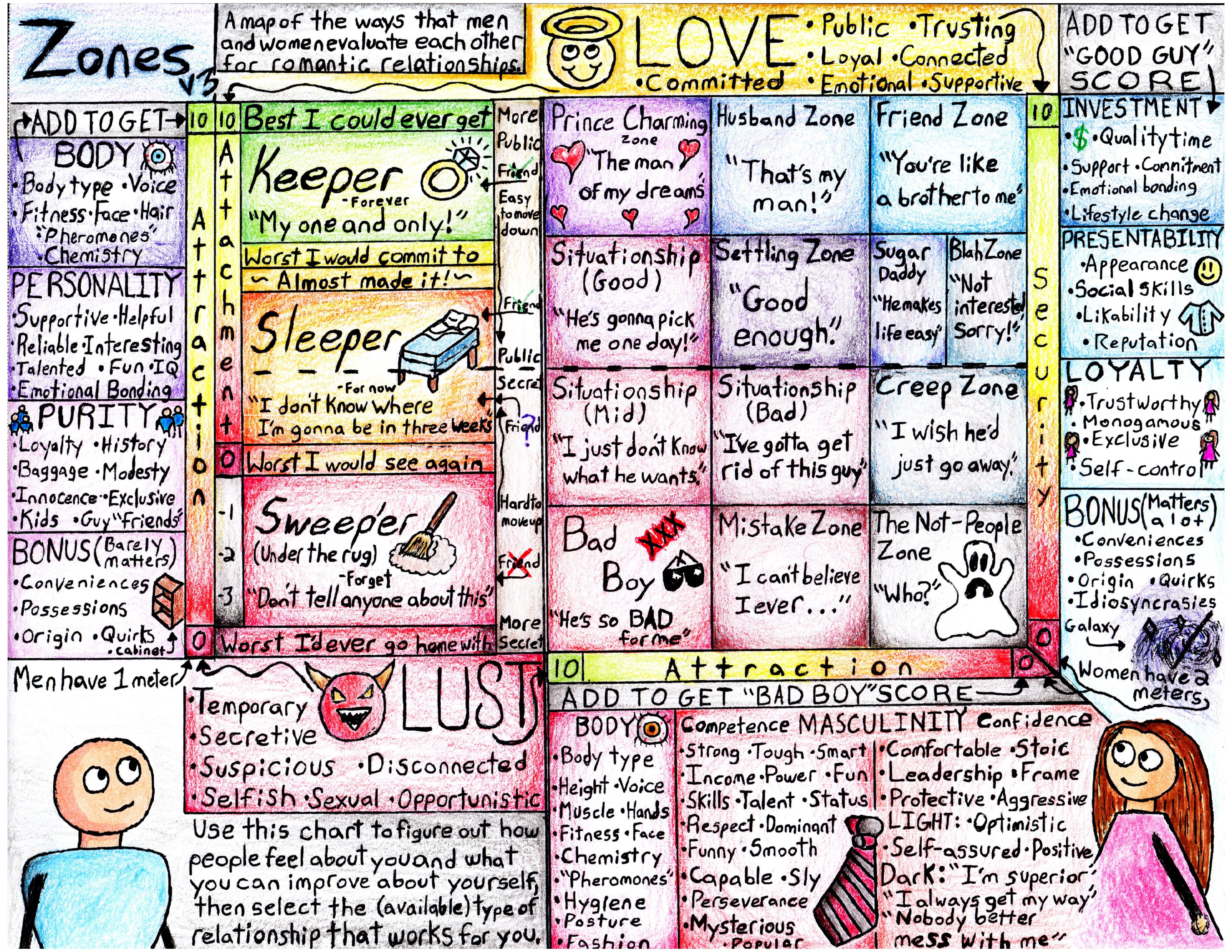
I have included **Zones v2** and **v3** along with this packet (printable on 8.5x11). In the **Self-Maximize** video on YouTube, I went over each category in Zones, what they mean, and which parts I think people in my society typically need to pay attention to. I also included a checklist that matches the order I went over themin the video.

Use these images as a quick reference, and use my explanation in the video as a starting point for finding your own areas that need improvement. You should be looking at the boxes that pertain to you, imagining the person you want to like you, and thinking: "What do I have that fits in these boxes? What does my desired person want me to have? What do I lack? What do I need to change? How could I change that? How could I be more physically attractive? How could I earn higher social status? What sort of investment should I be offering?" and so on.


Zones
Supportive
Public
Monogamous
Emotional
LOVE
Best I can get
More Investment
Keepers
"My one and only"
Sleepers
"I dunno where I'm gonna be in 3 weeks, ya know?
Sweepers
(Under the rug)
Worst I'll take
LESS Investment
LOOKS
+
PERSONALITY
−
+5
OTHER MEN
+
CABINET
More Public
More Secret
Prince Charming
Ideal LT
Husband zone
Friend zone
Good
Settling
Gold Digger/ Ick
Mid
Bad
Creep
Situationships
Bad Boy
xxx
Ideal ST
Mistake
HI — Good Guy # — LO
HI — Bad Boy # — LO
INVESTMENT
+
PRESENTABLE
−
OTHER WOMEN
+
GALAXY
LOOKS
• Face
• Body
• Height
• Voice
+ MASCULINITY
• Dominance
• Power
• Confidence
• "Smoothness"
• Dark Triad
LUST
Opportunistic
Secret
Multiple partners
Impulsive

Zones v3

A map of the ways that men and women evaluate each other for romantic relationships.


LOVE
•Public •Trusting
•Loyal •Connected
•Committed •Emotional •Supportive
ADD TO GET "GOOD GUY" SCORE
INVESTMENT
•$ •Quality time
•Support •Commitment
•Emotional bonding
•Lifestyle change
PRESENTABILITY
•Appearance
•Social skills
•Likability
•Reputation
LOYALTY
•Trustworthy
•Monogamous
•Exclusive
•Self-control
BONUS (Matters a lot)
•Conveniences
•Possessions
•Origin •Quirks
•Idiosyncrasies
Galaxy
Women have 2 meters
ADD TO GET
BODY
•Body type •Voice
•Fitness •Face •Hair
•"Pheromones"
•Chemistry
PERSONALITY
•Supportive •Helpful
•Reliable •Interesting
•Talented •Fun •IQ
•Emotional Bonding
PURITY
•Loyalty •History
•Baggage •Modesty
•Innocence •Exclusive
•Kids •Guy "Friends"
BONUS (Barely matters)
•Conveniences
•Possessions
•Origin •Quirks
•cabinet
Men have 1 meter
Attraction
10
0
Attachment
10
0
-1
-2
-3
Best I could ever get
Keeper
-Forever
"My one and only!"
Worst I would commit to
~Almost made it!~
Sleeper
-For now
"I don't know where I'm gonna be in three weeks"
Worst I would see again
Sweeper
(Under the rug)
-Forget
"Don't tell anyone about this"
Worst I'd ever go home with
More Public
Friend
Easy to move down
Friend
Public
Secret
Friend
Hard to move up
Friend
More Secret
Prince Charming Zone
"The man of my dreams"
Husband Zone
"That's my man!"
Friend Zone
"You're like a brother to me"
Situationship (Good)
"He's gonna pick me one day!"
Settling Zone
"Good enough."
Sugar Daddy
"He makes life easy"
Blah Zone
"Not interested Sorry!"
Situationship (Mid)
"I just don't know what he wants."
Situationship (Bad)
"I've gotta get rid of this guy"
Creep Zone
"I wish he'd just go away."
Bad Boy
XXX
"He's so BAD for me"
Mistake Zone
"I can't believe I ever…"
The Not-People Zone
"Who?"
Security
10
0
Attraction
10
0
ADD TO GET "BAD BOY" SCORE
LUST
•Temporary
•Secretive
•Suspicious •Disconnected
•Selfish •Sexual •Opportunistic
BODY
•Body type
•Height •Voice
•Muscle •Hands
•Fitness •Face
•Chemistry
•"Pheromones"
•Hygiene
•Posture
•Fashion
Competence MASCULINITY Confidence
•Strong •Tough •Smart
•Income •Power •Fun
•Skills •Talent •Status
•Respect •Dominant
•Funny •Smooth
•Capable •Sly
•Perseverance
•Mysterious
•Popular
•Comfortable •Stoic
•Leadership •Frame
•Protective •Aggressive
LIGHT: •Optimistic
•Self-assured •Positive
Dark: "I'm superior"
"I always get my way"
"Nobody better mess with me"

Use this chart to figure out how people feel about you and what you can improve about yourself, then select the (available) type of relationship that works for you.

ZONES CHECKLIST

MEN

- **BODY**
  - **Fitness**
    - Muscle
    - Fat
    - Ability
  - **Fashion**
    - Appropriate
    - Put-Together
    - Expressive
  - **Mannerisms**
    - Posture
    - Speech
    - Habits
  - **Grooming**
    - Hygeine
    - Hair

- **COMPETENCE**
  - **Power**
    - Income
    - Protection
    - Control
  - **Status**
    - Respect
    - Importance
    - Dominance
  - **Skills**
    - Practical
    - Talent

- **CONFIDENCE**
  - **Frame**
    - Deciding
    - Stability
    - Clarity
  - **Presence**
    - Engaging
    - Expressing
    - Gravity
    - Grounding

- **PRESENTABILITY**
  - **Appearance**
    - Appropriate
    - Respectable
  - **Reputation**
    - Positive
    - Reliable
    - Valuable

- **INVESTMENT**
  - **Time**
    - Quality Time
    - Putting in the Work
  - **Attention**
    - Praise
    - Noticing
    - Approving
    - Appreciating
  - **Money**
    - Providing
  - **Energy**
    - Availability
    - Commitment
  - **Intimacy**
    - Closeness
    - Connecting
    - Boundary Sharing

- **LOYALTY**
  - **Past**
    - Dating Patterns
    - Closure
  - **Present**
    - Focus

- **BONUS (GALAXY)**
  - **Possessions**
    - Home
    - Car
    - Recreation
  - **Access**
    - Industries
    - Social Groups
    - Individuals
    - Institutions
  - **Quirks**
    - Accent
    - Traits
    - Habits
  - **Origins**
    - Born / Raised
    - School
    - Ideology
  - **Miscellaneous**
    - Things You Have, not Things You Are

WOMEN

- **BODY**
  - **Fitness**
    - In Shape
  - **Modesty**
    - Balanced
    - Look good for him, not for everyone else

- **PERSONALITY**
  - **Interesting**
    - Knowledgable
    - Complex
    - Developed
  - **Positive**
    - Fun
    - Cooperative
  - **Supportive**
    - Financial
    - Emotional
  - **Intimate**
    - Connection
    - Trusting
  - **Sane**
    - Low Baggage
    - Self-Control
    - Emotional Regulation
    - Self-aware

- **PURITY**
  - **Past**
    - Body Count
    - Kids
    - Hoe Phase
    - Experience
  - **Present**
    - Exclusivity
    - Guy “Friends”

- **BONUS (CABINET)**
    - Same as Men, Just Less Important